

## **Reflection of the CSW63 Parallel Panel Event: Student Engaged Learning to Empower Mountain Women and Girls**



*UIMF Members in front of United Nations Headquarters (from L to R) Ezra Pugliano, Laila Mitchell, Hannah Bieker, Hailee Hodgson, Megan Davis*

On the morning of Tuesday March 19, 2019, the Globalization and Sustainable Development students, Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) members, Utah Valley University (UVU) students and faculty members all gathered together in the U.N. Church Center building to prepare for the Parallel Panel Event.

During this event, 13 students and 1 faculty member gave their regards about Student Engaged Learning to Empower Mountain Women and Girls. Our Moderator and UIMF Vice President, Michael Hinatsu, started off the meeting with some brief remarks about the harsh socio-economic issues that mountain women face around the world and a quick background on the goals of UIMF and what we advocate for. After Michael's remarks, Dr. Baldomero Lago gave his remarks and chose to dedicate this panel event to Mrs. Danielle Butler, a co-founder of the Women

of the Mountains Conferences WOMC and wife to Dr. Rusty Butler, head of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, who recently passed away on March 7th. As students of UVU and members of UIMF we all express our deep appreciation for her tireless support both to the WOMCs and student engaged learning at UVU until the last moments of her life. Many vast topics were covered during the Parallel Panel Event by the 14 event speakers including topics such as the Mormon pioneer women who founded and settled Utah, empowering women through business leadership roles, strong mountain women in leadership positions who have made a difference, the Youth and the Mountains Journal, mountain women issues and how Utah combats those issues, what Rotaract does in Utah, and much more.



*Megan Davis makes her presentation during the Parallel Panel Event*

It was an honor for me to be able to put in so much time and hard work for the past 3 months to make this trip happen. As I was preparing to give my statement and choose my topic, I researched a lot of topics and gained useful knowledge through engaged learning that I would not have received in any other way. During my statement, I had the opportunity to speak on some important topics to me and highlight amazing women. Some of the amazing Utah mountain women

I highlighted include Ms. Reva Beck Bosone, the first woman from Utah to get elected to the U.S. Congress; Elena Bonner, a prominent human-rights activist and co-founder of WOMC; Dr. Jane Pratt, executive director of the Mountain Institute in Washington, D.C. and co-founder of WOMC; Olene Walker, first female governor of the State of Utah and co-founder of WOMC; Dr. Danielle Butler, the Honorary Consul of the Kyrgyz Republic in the State of Utah and co-founder of WOMC; and last but not least, Mrs. Jackie Biskupski, the current mayor of Salt Lake City, who also played a pivotal role in bringing the upcoming United Nations Civil Society (UNSC) Conference in August to Salt Lake City. I loved being able to highlight these outstanding women, speak on some of my personal experiences I have had as a young mountain woman in Utah and my accomplishments, and my encouragement and advice on empowering ourselves and other women.

It was an honor to be able to speak at such a high-level gender forum a during the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I have gained many useful and professional skills through this trip and conference that I never would have gained while attending any other university all due to the engaged learning model that has been set up and implemented by Utah Valley University. I am very grateful for the knowledge and experiences I have gained through the Utah International Mountain Forum and UVU and hope to continue to participate in these high-level professional events in the future.

*Megan Davis, UNA-USA Liaison and UIMF Member, UVU*